

chose to be governed, it, was only required that he should make it publicly, and such elections were frequent. (1) The Clergy, in particular, who were chiefly Romans, considered the privilege of being governed by the Roman Law to be so valuable, that when any person entered into holy orders, it was usual for him to renounce the Law to which he had been formerly subject, and to declare that he would, from henceforth, be governed by the Roman Code. (2) Many customs, also, peculiar to the victors, were continued after the conquest of Gaul.—It had, particularly been their practice to meet in council, at the close of every winter, upon the state of their respective nations; and during the first and second Dynasties, several meetings of the Sovereign and of the Chiefs, in church and state, with the addition of the commons (from the reign of Charlemagne) were held, in the open air, annually in the month of March or May, and from thence denominated *champs de mars*, or *champs de mai*. (3)

In these Assemblies, Laws were passed for the government of the Kingdom at large, and Canons established for the regulation of the Church—Taxes were imposed—Regencies were appointed, and the Sovereign elected until the Crown became hereditary, and then, the Successor was proclaimed, if his right to the Throne was not controverted, and, if it was, it was solemnly determined (4). The question on each subject of discussion was generally propounded by the King, who, when it had been fully debated, pronounced the definitive resolution. The result was then put into writing, the questions and resolutions which were passed upon them were reduced under distinct heads, called Chapters, and to collections of several Chapters was given the name of Capitulars (5).

It is certain that a Supreme Jurisdiction over all persons, and all causes, was exercised by the Assemblies of the *Champs de Mars*, but the precise extent of that Jurisdiction, which was originally vested in the subordinate Courts of the Crown, or of the feudal Lords or Seigneurs, cannot now be deter-

(1) *Esprit des Loix*, Liber. 28, cap. 2d. Fleury, p. 18.

(2) Robertson's Charles V, vol. 1st. p. 315. Fleury, p. 39.

(4) *Encyclopædia Method. de Jurisp. verb "Champ de Mars,"* vol. 1st. part 2d, p. 449, Robertson's Charles V. vol. 1st. p. 167.

(5) Fleury, p. 40.

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